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Letterbox Club Scotland

Report to Booktrust

February 2014



the letterbox club



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All children and carers have been given pseudonyms in order to maintain their anonymity.

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Lauren's Drawing: Me and my blue letterbox parcel.



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1. Introduction and Background

The University of Edinburgh was commissioned by Booktrust during 2013 to conduct an independent evaluation of the Letterbox Club pilot in Scotland. This evaluation consists of five in-depth case studies of children and their carers in two local authorities in Scotland.

1.1. Letterbox Club

Letterbox Club currently provides educational support to looked-after children aged 7-13 years in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Personalised parcels containing carefully selected books, stationery and tailored maths games are sent to their current home address once a month for six months. It is hoped that the parcels will encourage children to engage more with reading, do more numeracy activities and write and draw more frequently. It is intended that this will lead to improved academic attainment in the long-term. Additionally, the resources aim to help children and carers build their relationships by increasing the amount of time they spend interacting with each other through sharing the books and activities together. Letterbox Club hope that the children will enjoy receiving personalised parcels and their contents, and engagement with the project will increase their confidence and wellbeing.

Letterbox Scotland piloted the Letterbox Club to a selected cohort of 150 looked-after children aged 7-11 years between May/June and October/November 2013 in five local authorities (Glasgow, Edinburgh, Inverclyde, Aberdeenshire and Highlands) with the long term aim of making Letterbox Club available by subscription to as many eligible looked-after children as possible in Scotland. Letterbox Club has previously worked with two local authorities in Scotland (Aberdeenshire and Perth & Kinross) from 2009-2011. Letterbox Club worked with representatives from all the local authorities involved in the pilot and key members of staff were identified in each of the participating local authorities with the remit of implementing the initiative.

A number of evaluations and research studies have been conducted in England (Griffiths et al., 2008; Griffiths et al., 2009; Dymoke and Griffiths, 2010), Wales (Griffiths and Comber, 2011) and Northern Ireland (Winter et al., 2011) to look at the impact that the Letterbox Club initiative had on children's reading and numeracy skills. For this reason Booktrust did not feel that it was necessary to repeat a large-scale quantitative evaluation of Letterbox Club in Scotland. This evaluation therefore consisted primarily of in-depth case studies of a small number of children.

1.2. Aims of the Evaluation

The main aim of the research was to evaluate the impact of the Letterbox parcels on children and carers. More specifically the research aims include:

- To explore the child's attitudes, confidence and enjoyment around reading, writing and maths, and how these may have changed as a result of receiving the Letterbox Club parcels.
- To gather children's and carers' opinions of the parcels in terms of appearance, quality, educational value, usefulness, age-appropriateness, interest and enjoyment.
- To explore how the parcels have been used in the home: frequency; length of time; extent of carer (or other family member) involvement.
- To discuss the participants' experiences of receiving the parcels each month and the impact this has had on the child.
- To highlight specific examples of how the programme has impacted upon the child (and carer).
- To consider whether the programme has led to increases in the amount of time children spend reading, doing maths activities, writing and drawing.

1.3. Looked After Children and Young People in Scotland

The total number of looked after children in Scotland at July 2012 was 16, 248, with the number increasing every year since 2001. Of the total number of looked after children and young people in 2012, 43% were living at home, 15% were with relatives (kinship carers), 29% were with foster carers, and 12% were in residential accommodation. The continuous increase in numbers of looked after children is due to more children being looked after away from home in community settings, in particular with foster carers/prospective adopters, with friends and relatives and other community settings. In 2012 it was the first time that there were more children looked after by foster carers/prospective adopters than looked after at home (Scottish Government, 2013). A scoping study of looked after children in Scotland (Cundy and Duffy, 2010) found that parents of those looked after at home are less likely to engage with schools than foster carers. The research also revealed that there are fewer supervision meetings for children looked after at home and therefore less opportunity to discuss educational support.

The Scottish Parliament launched an inquiry into the educational attainment of looked after children and young people in September 2011 to gather evidence about why the educational attainment of looked after children had not improved despite a range of past interventions aimed at improving outcomes. According to the Scottish Government the findings for 2010/11

made 'uncomfortable reading' as rates of attendance, exclusions, attainment and reaching further/higher education or employment after school were much worse than for those who have not experienced care. For example, the overall exclusion rate for looked after children was 326 per 1,000 looked after children, compared with 40 exclusions per 1,000 pupils for all school children (Scottish Government, 2012). Statistics for attendance and exclusions are only available every two years.

A third annual summary of the educational outcomes of Scotland's looked after children was published in 2013 (Scottish Government, 2013). In the academic year 2011/12 there were 79% looked after school leavers aged under 16 compared to 30% of all school leavers in the same age group. Looked after children obtained lower levels of qualification on average than school leavers, but looked after children's attainment has improved slightly over the last three years. The average tariff score (based on Scottish examination results) for looked after children who left school during the 2011/12 academic year was 106, compared to 406 for all school leavers. Educational attainment varies across the types of accommodation in which looked after children are placed. Of looked after young people who left school during 2011/12, average tariff scores were highest for young people who were looked after by foster carers provided by the local authority (with an average score of 199) and lowest for young people who were looked after at home (with an average score of 40) for the entire school year. Unfortunately, using data of this type for cross UK comparisons is problematic because of the differences in the education systems and examination arrangements in Scotland and the other countries that make up the UK.

1.4. Policy Context in Scotland

Parliamentary devolution in 1999¹ has led to significant divergences in educational policy and practice across the four nations of the United Kingdom (Gunning and Raffe, 2011). This process is reflected in Scotland's emerging *Curriculum for Excellence*. The new curriculum aims to transform school practices by placing an emphasis on a teacher-developed curriculum and situating the learner and learning at the centre of the process – including active, interdisciplinary and personalised learning approaches. It has been argued that the flexibility

¹ Previous to the creation of the Scottish Parliament in 1999 educational policy and practice in Scotland (along with the church and law) had remained distinctive from the ways of England and the other two nations – Wales and Northern Ireland – that make up the rest of the United Kingdom (UK).

provided by *Curriculum for Excellence* provides for more pupil choice which can be structured around meeting the needs of looked after children and young people. Furthermore, greater autonomy in educational policy formation has seen different approaches to testing and assessment in Scotland compared to England (Scottish Government, 2010a).

Wherever children are looked after, they have the same right to education as any other child growing up in Scotland. A particular child or young person who is being looked after away from home and placed with foster parents in another local authority will as a rule attend a school in that local authority. An Inspectorate Report examined existing practice concerning the education of looked after children in a number of local authorities and partner organisations, and concluded that overall, looked after children achieve less well than their peers (HMIE, 2008). The Report found that looked after children are more likely to be excluded, be placed in non-mainstream settings, and have part-time timetables. Furthermore, for many, even attending school is a significant challenge for a number of complex and inter-related reasons:

... because education may have been given low priority in their lives and because of the emotional difficulties they experience. For some, being moved frequently causes significant disruption to important relationships and makes settling into a new school very difficult. Having experienced exclusion and failure, it is much more difficult for many looked after children to achieve. At the same time, there are some who do succeed in education and achieve very good educational outcomes. The children and young people themselves invariably tell us that they believe education and educational achievements are important to them. They understand that how well they do at school will have an impact on their achievements when they move into adulthood.

(HM Inspectorate of Education, 2008:5)

The Education (Additional Support for Learning) (Scotland) Act 2004 (amended 2009) (Scottish Government, 2009a) provides the legal framework underpinning the system for supporting children and young people in their school education, and their families. This framework represented a milestone in policy development by providing a broader conceptualisation of those who require additional support with their learning. These ranged from children and young people with a specific learning difficulty or impairment to learners with challenging life circumstances, such as homelessness or living with parents who suffer from mental health problems or alcohol and drug abuse. This shift towards a more inclusive ideology with an emphasis on a dynamic understanding of 'need' rather than 'special needs' includes looked after children and young people. The amended 2009 Act automatically deems that all looked after children and young people have additional support needs unless the education authority determine that they do not require additional support in order to benefit from school education. The reason for this is that there is considerable evidence that looked after children and young

people face significant cultural and institutional barriers which impede their success in school education (Scottish Government, 2009b).

Children and young people who are looked after (both at home and away from home) often require individually tailored support to get the best from their school education. According to *Supporting Children's Learning Code of Practice (Revised Edition)* (Scottish Government, 2010b) education authorities must consider whether each looked after child or young person for whose school education they are responsible requires an individualised educational programme or a co-ordinated support plan (CSP). A CSP involves support from an agency outside education, such as social work, to ensure that the support for learning is coordinated effectively across agencies. This inter-agency working is supported by the principles that underpin *Getting it right for every child (GIRFEC)* which integrates and coordinates plans developed by different agencies to assess and meet learners needs in line with the indicators of wellbeing (Scottish Executive, 2005).

A number of other policy developments and care and support measures have been put in place in Scotland over the years to improve the educational outcomes of looked after children and young people. These include

- The Scottish Executive (2007) report *Looked After Children and Young People: We Can and Must Do Better*, highlights areas for improvement and identifies actions to take forward.
- *These Are Our Bairns* (Scottish Government 2008a), which offers guidance for community planning partnerships on how to be a good corporate parent, sets out the responsibilities of local authorities and their partners to looked after children, and outlines measurements for success.
- *The Educational Attainment of Looked After Children* (2008b) reports on a programme of pilots across local authorities that were designed to improve the educational attainment of looked after children.
- *Do The Right Thing* (2009c) is a Scottish Government action plan to address the recommendations of the United Nations Committee on the Rights of the Child, which includes improving the outcomes for looked after children by supporting local authorities to be effective corporate parents.
- Scottish Parliament (2012) Education and Culture Committee *The Educational Attainment of Looked after Children*. A number of recommendations are reported to Parliament concerning the particular needs of looked after children

After this introduction and background the following section addresses the research design and research tools employed during the evaluation. Next, a longer, discursive section presents the individual case studies. The final part contains the findings that emerged from the research and recommendations for future projects.

2. Research Design and Methods

This evaluation draws on a range of data sets to offer an in-depth exploration of the impact of Letterbox Club Scotland with the aim of gathering, as Cresswell (1998:61) describes, ‘multiple sources of information rich in context.’ The data collection process was phased (see timetable below for details) to allow the researchers to build on learning gained during the project.

Data was gathered during the following three phases of the project:

1. Initial meeting and completing profiles with carers and children.
2. Evaluation sheets completed by children and carers for each of the six Letterbox parcels.
3. Individual interviews with carers and children after they had received the sixth and final parcel.

2.1. Timetable

Activity	Date
Research commissioned	February 2013
Inception meeting (via telephone)	February 2013
Glasgow: Induction Day/ Booktrust meeting	March 2013
Designing research tools	April/May 2013
Familiarisation with previous studies and Letterbox resources	April/May 2013
Local Authority(LA) recruitment of families for case studies and profile/questionnaire issued	April/May 2013
Profile Gathering LA 1 children and carers	June 2013
Profile Gathering LA 2 (group 1) children and carers	June 2013
Profile Gathering LA 2 (group 2) children and carers	June 2013
Interviews LA 1 children and carers and LA staff	November 2013
Interviews LA 2 (group 1) children and carers	November 2013
Interviews LA 2 (group 2) children and carers and LA staff	November 2013
Transcribing interviews and data analysis	December 2013
Final report	February 2014

Phase 1

Data was captured from the profile questionnaires (see Appendix 4) at the beginning of the study. This involved eight families (carers and children) across two local authorities (Glasgow and Inverclyde). The profile questionnaires were used to gain background information to frame the case studies. They included family details, the children’s schooling and offered extensive and rich insights into the children and carers’ current activities relating to literacy,

maths and drawing in the home as well as their expectations of the Letterbox Club. The profile questionnaires were used as a conversation tool and an opportunity to build a rapport with the participants to support the final phase and interview process. The intention here was to capture the families' lived experiences as the project commenced and not to establish a baseline for quantitative data comparison.

A key role in the selection of participants was played by the local authority representatives in partnership with the researchers in order to guarantee a balance of age, gender and looked after circumstances. The representatives also organised putting the evaluation forms into the different parcels, coordinating the return of evaluation forms to the researchers and arranging the timetable for the meetings with the families during Phase One and Phase Three of the evaluation.

Although arranging three separate meetings during Phase One, in two separate local authorities was very time-consuming, it allowed positive working relationships to be established 'between strangers' from the start (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). Furthermore, it allowed space and time to share the aims of the project, explain the research process and discuss issues of confidentiality and consent, particularly with the children (Alderson, 2009). The local authority representatives decided on the location of the meetings, a setting that was familiar to the children and their carers. This had the benefit of allowing the participants to feel more comfortable, relaxed and have a sense of control over the situation.

Phase 2

Evaluation sheets designed by the researchers were included in each of the six parcels (see examples Appendix 5 and Appendix 6). Children were asked to indicate their views about the resources using a four point smiley face scale, importantly space for written comments was available and children were encouraged to add their comments about individual books, the numbers games and stationary. Comment boxes were also provided for carers to add their own views and opinions on each parcel. The written comments were used as a stimulus for conversations with the children and interviews with carers during the final phase of the project.

Phase 3

The third phase consisted of interviews with six carers and conversations with eight children, from five families. The semi-structured interviews with the carers were carefully planned by the two researchers in advance and framed from a wide collection of main topics to be covered (whilst allowing a free-flowing conversation). The sequencing of the questions in the interview schedules remained flexible to cover these themes and a branching structure was created in which questions were asked in the light of previous answers (Appendix 8). The conversations

with children were supported by using their own evaluation forms and open-ended questions (Appendix 7). They were encouraged to expand on their ideas and follow their interests during the conversations.

The importance of listening to, and gaining views from children is at the centre of this study as the meanings that children attach to their experiences are not necessarily the meanings that their teachers or carers would ascribe (Lloyd-Smith and Tar, 2000). In the last decade there has been a shift in emphasis from traditional and psychological research 'on' or 'about' children to emancipatory research 'with' children (Fraser et al., 2004). This new approach challenges the objectification of children and is designed to be child-friendly and respectful of children's agency as individuals in their own right. This assertion has a number of implications for the research conduct as it recognises children as competent and knowledgeable participants and experts in their everyday worlds (Einarsdóttir, 2007).

The views of the children were vital in this study and the researchers were heedful of Clark and colleagues (2005) who argue that whilst listening is an expression of rights it is also part and parcel of ethical practice. The children were informed of the role of the researchers and were reminded that they could withdraw from the process at any stage. During the conversations the researchers were vigilant of any anxiety or embarrassment. This was prevented by watching out for indications that children might prefer to withdraw from the research despite the fact that they may not express this desire verbally (Alderson and Morrow, 2004). In addition, children's perceptions and experiences were gathered using conversations around drawings, an approach that has been used in previous studies (Clark et al., 2005; Einarsdóttir et al., 2009).

All the final interviews were recorded, with the permission of the participants and fully transcribed. The analysis involved both of the researchers working independently and collaboratively. Each transcript was read thoroughly by the two members of the team to ensure consistency of interpretation. Themes emerging from the data were at first identified and coded, then regularly cross-checked by the two researchers to validate the themes emerging from each case study.

In summary, data was gathered from a range of the key participants and partners in the project including:

- 11 children
- 9 carers
- 2 local authority representatives
- 1 social worker
- 1 social care worker

This report focuses on the data collected from the children and carers. From this sample five case studies became naturally self-selecting as some families could not attend for interview at different phases of the project because of challenging family circumstances. However, the resulting five case studies did maintain a balance of gender, age, foster/kinship care and children receiving Red and Blue Letterbox parcels.

2.2. Ethical Considerations

The researchers submitted an application form to the University of Edinburgh Ethics Sub-Committee (ESC) for ethical approval before the research commenced. Details of the School of Education's research ethics approval system and procedure, and Ethical guidelines for research with children and vulnerable groups are available at:

<https://www.wiki.ed.ac.uk/display/edusupwiki/Research+Ethics>

The researchers produced three different consent forms (Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3) for all of the research participants (children, carers and professionals). Separate local authority Ethics Application forms were completed by the researchers and submitted with additional research documentation to Social Work Services in the two local authorities. As the looked after children participating in the project were under twelve years of age, the local authorities also sought consent from their birth parents or the adult who holds parental rights and responsibilities for the child.

3. Case Studies

3.1. Case Study One: Michael

Michael is eight years old and lives with his grandmother. He is a very active boy who enjoys football, playing outside with his friends and going swimming.

At school he receives additional support for learning. Michael said he is good at maths, but that he does not like reading 'because it's hard'. He talked about how Gran helped him with his reading. Gran explained that she encourages him to read at home, but said 'it was a fight'. She talked about trying to get him to do his reading homework at night, and described how Michael would often say he had left the book at school and then she would have to search in his bag for it. Gran said he only reads his class reader a couple of times a week and that she could not get him to do it because 'it upsets him'. He does not read at all during school holidays.

Michael is not a member of the local library and Gran said there are very few books in the house and that she has no time for books. When they go to the newsagent together she buys Michael comics, but he is only interested if there is a free toy inside and he does not 'look inside the comic.' Gran said she was keen to help him and thought his membership of the Letterbox Club would improve his reading.

When asked about his favourite book Michael mentioned his current book from the school reading scheme. Other books he mentioned were books his teachers had read with him at school and when he talked about these books he was able to retell the stories in an interesting way. He also described the characters from his school readers and knew the level he is on in the reading scheme.

Michael said that it felt 'good being in the Book Club' because everyone was asking him where he got the books from. He compared the 'Book Club' to a Film Club at school that some of the other children were members of and he seemed to like the idea of being in a club.

Michael enjoys drawing and this is an activity he does on his own and with his Auntie when he goes to visit her. Michael said he used the pens and jotters from the parcels for drawing and writing. Gran reported that she had noticed that he had done more drawing at home since the parcels arrived. Michael thought the drawing book had helped him with his drawing and explained how he had used the tracing paper. He felt that the book was 'good for my age and younger'. Michael particularly liked writing his name in the jotters in different ways, for example 'in cool writing like bubbly and all that...like graffiti'. He enjoys making Ninja Stars out of folded

paper and he used the colouring pens from one of the parcels to decorate these origami designs. Gran noted that this was one activity that Michael had really concentrated on.

Michael's Drawing: *It's me holding my books, one of the big blue packages. I'm picking up the books that just came through the letterbox.*



Michael said that he liked maths and that at school he was learning about 'exchanging'. Before getting the parcels, the only number related games he played at home were on his Xbox, but Gran said that whenever he opened the parcels 'he went straight for the games'. When he opened the first parcel Michael was surprised because, as he explained, 'I thought I would only be getting books, but I got games as well'. He played the Letterbox games with various family members and often made up his own rules. Michael thought that games were 'about right' for his age. Michael particularly enjoyed playing the money game with his Auntie and a friend and when he was at her house she would read the instructions to him. He used the calculator and Gran said that he walked about with the money in his pocket 'as if it was real money... kidding on to his pals that he was loaded'.

Michael found the books difficult to read. He talked about sitting on the carpet and looking at the pictures in the books and he said 'I read some words'. Michael said that he took some of the books to his Auntie's house and she read 'a wee bit' to him.

At bedtime Michael usually watches DVDs, although he did mention that occasionally he would take one of the books from the parcels to bed. He explained how he was not able to read the book independently:

I just look at the pictures 'cause I am not with my Gran. My Gran can't help me so I just read words that I can in my bed, then when it's time to go to sleep I go to sleep.

Although both Michael and his grandmother talked about his difficulties with reading, it was clear that Michael had taken some time to look at the books and he could describe a range of books from different parcels. When he was asked what he thought about getting the books he said:

It just makes me look at the pages more, like look at them - the books more, instead of just going out and playing and that.

One of his favourite books was *Dear Vampa* and he talked about this at length. Michael also liked *The Body Book* and he rated it as 'good' because 'it learns you how to take care of your bones and all that'. He explained that he had looked at the pictures in this book and had asked his Gran to help him with some of the words.

He spoke enthusiastically about *The Enormous Crocodile* and Michael was able to retell the story in detail. He was keen to stress that his teacher had the same book at school and she had read it to the class. He had enjoyed this story at school and he had attempted to read it on his own, but said that he had only managed up to page five because it was near his bedtime.

Although Michael has difficulties with reading, he was able to put into practice some of the strategies he had been taught at school when selecting books to read from the parcels. Talking about *The Finger Eater* he justified why it had not appealed to him:

Didn't really read it. Nuh, didn't like it. Because it didn't look good from the outside and then when I looked at the pictures inside and then I read the thing on the back, see the blurb, read that, it didn't sound that good. I didn't like it.

Michael made the links between *The Deadly 60* book and the related TV series. He was very keen to talk about information he had learned from the presenter about what action to take when a person is bitten by a poisonous snake.

And he shows you what the animals are, poison and all that, and what they can do. And this snake bit a guy and you have to start putting more blood into you and keep on doing it until you get normal blood again. If it's a poison snake you have to keep on- there is this big jag machine you take with you - you have to keep on jaggging yourself till you get all the poison blood into that jag and then it puts normal blood into you.

Michael particularly liked the *Ancient Egypt Sticker Book* because this was his topic at school. When the book arrived in the parcel this prompted Michael to talk to Gran about what he was learning at school. Before he got this book Gran explained that she had no idea that he was studying Egypt at school and that he had 'never told' her about it. As Michael does not have a computer in the house he decided to go to his Auntie's house to ask her to print 'stuff about Egypt'. Michael had instigated this himself and Gran said he was 'chuffed' that his Auntie had helped him and that he found lots of information. He took the material that he had downloaded from the internet to school to show his teacher, but he did not take the book as his Gran said that she did not want any of the books 'to get damaged'.

Gran said the Letterbox Club was 'great', however, talking about Michael's reluctance to read she noted that he had left the final Letterbox parcel unopened in the house for weeks. She felt that she would have liked some information in the parcel about ways 'that would have helped you get him interested in it'.

3.2. Case Study Two: Caitlin

Caitlin is ten years old. She lives with her foster carers Tom and Grace, and Jack aged seven who is also a looked after child. Caitlin enjoys reading, swimming, playing music and using her iPad. She is a Girl Guide and recently took part in the 'Great Girl Guide Bake Off'. Both children are members of a range of clubs as their carers explained they wanted the children to 'get as many experiences as possible, and encourage them to be confident on their own'.

Caitlin was keen to take part in the Letterbox Club from the start. She said she loves reading and reads everyday even 'in the middle of getting ready' in the morning. Her favourite author is Jacqueline Wilson and recently her carer bought her the complete set of this author's books, which Caitlin said 'was amazing'. She also buys books from charity shops. Her carers described how she reads 'for an hour at a time'. She likes writing stories and songs. She said she rarely played number games and she did not really like maths, saying she was 'rubbish at it'. When she got the parcel she was surprised to get so many books as she thought that there would be only one book in each parcel. She also had not expected to get any games.

Caitlin described opening one of the parcels:

My wee brother was like 'open it, open it' and he was urging me, so I opened it, and then I saw owls, and I really, really like owls, 'cause I like the way that they move and the way that they fly...I like owls, so it was quite good to have an owl book. So I read it all in like two minutes.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	 ✓				I ♥ OWLS ★

Caitlin's Evaluation Sheet

Caitlin described herself as a good reader who really likes books and she believes that being a member of the Letterbox Club has been 'very good' for her in terms of extending her vocabulary. She described how sometimes she came across words in the books from the parcels that she was 'not sure of' and she would ask her carers to explain the meaning. She continued, 'they explain it and then I explain it back to them, and then I get a sort of idea in my head'. On other occasions,


she said that she tried to do it herself and she ‘didn’t go straight away’ to ask her carers, rather she tried ‘to figure it out using the sentence and the picture’.

Caitlin believed that *Write Your Own Story* was a very helpful book and that it had improved her story writing ‘a lot’. She offered an example of when she was with her class, writing outside in the woods. She said:

I was stuck at something in my work and then I remembered one of the pages from the book and then I went, ‘Oh, that’s how you do it’, and the teacher said it was much more interesting the way I put it.

She explained that she had used the word ‘and’ too many times in her writing, so she decided to use the word ‘therefore’ instead. The teacher had praised her for this and had given her a star. Caitlin was very proud of this and she then went on to recount the conversation that had taken place with her teacher:

Caitlin, how did you get this? You never do this in your own story writing’. And I said, ‘Well I do this club and it’s called the Letterbox Club and they send you books and things’. So I said, ‘They sent me a book on how to write your own story and it has pages in it where it can help you’. Then she says, ‘Wow, so what do you do?’ and then I explained to her and she said, ‘Wow, I think I’m going to get one of them for my own!’

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	☺	☺	☹	⊗	I liked like Storywriting and it helped me in School. (with a circled X)

Caitlin’s Evaluation Sheet

Caitlin suggested that there could be more ‘story telling stuff’ in the parcels and she also described an idea she had for a language game that could be included. This involved developing a story using missing words ‘to make it better’.


Caitlin turned one of the jotters into a handwriting book by drawing lines in it. She felt her handwriting ‘isn’t really neat’ and she wanted to practice so that she could improve. She also used the jotters from the parcel for drawing. She liked the *How to Draw People* book and described how

she started by 'drawing what I normally draw' and 'improving it' by adding detail and 'now I can draw people much better'.


Her involvement in the Letterbox Club seems to have prompted her to consider different issues. For example Caitlin talked a lot about the educational value of the parcels, not just in terms of her own development, but also that of other children who may not be as good readers. For example, she highlighted the fact that the *Two Jacks* was described as 'a dyslexia friendly book' and she thought it would be good for some of the children in her class. She recognised the progression from the Blue to the Red parcel and suggested that:

If like children weren't doing good at school, and they couldn't really read that, well, maybe the Letterbox Club could help them, like sending them the Blue parcel and then the Red one.






Completing the evaluation form and scribing for Jack had encouraged Caitlin to consider what he thought about his books. Taking account of one of his responses she added an additional column to the evaluation sheet: 'Loved It'.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	☺	☹	☹	☹	EGYPT book because stickers were on it.

Jack's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by Caitlin

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	☺	☹	☹	☹	I liked it because the Giant got killed by Jack!

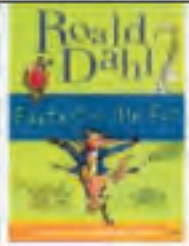




Jack's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by Caitlin

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					I Liked the beg- bad wolf dressing up as Granny!






Jack's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by Caitlin

One of the things that she really liked about being in the Letterbox Club was that children were asked to give their opinions about the books and that their views would be respected. She explained:

Well, I think it's just because you get your say in it. I mean if you like the books you can say, 'I like the books', and if you don't like the books you can just say that you didn't like them and it doesn't really matter if you're a good reader or not, it just depends on what your opinion is. Yeah, I like the way that they do these smiley faces, like that, and then the comment 'cause you can just write what you feel, and then you can just, you can just tell, and just share your feelings and it's good to know that nobody will shout at you and nobody will moan at you as well. That's what I like about the Letterbox Club.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					I Loved it so much

Caitlin's Evaluation Sheet


	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					it was good but a bit babyish

Caitlin's Evaluation Sheet

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Letterbox Club Joke Book		✓			Not all Jokes were funny!

Caitlin's Evaluation Sheet

Caitlin shared her membership of the Letterbox Club with her friends who she said were very impressed that she was getting 'loads of books for free'. She laughed when recalling telling her friends, 'Yeah, it's a good deal'. She thought the Letterbox Club was 'very generous' gifting so many books. She felt that the parcels contained 'very good books' and that receiving the parcels had extended the range of books to which she had access. She said 'It's good books you would not usually find'. Caitlin's carer also mentioned that the parcels had contained books that Caitlin had not seen before and that she had been interested in this 'new stuff'.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
		✓			Love it! it's awesome

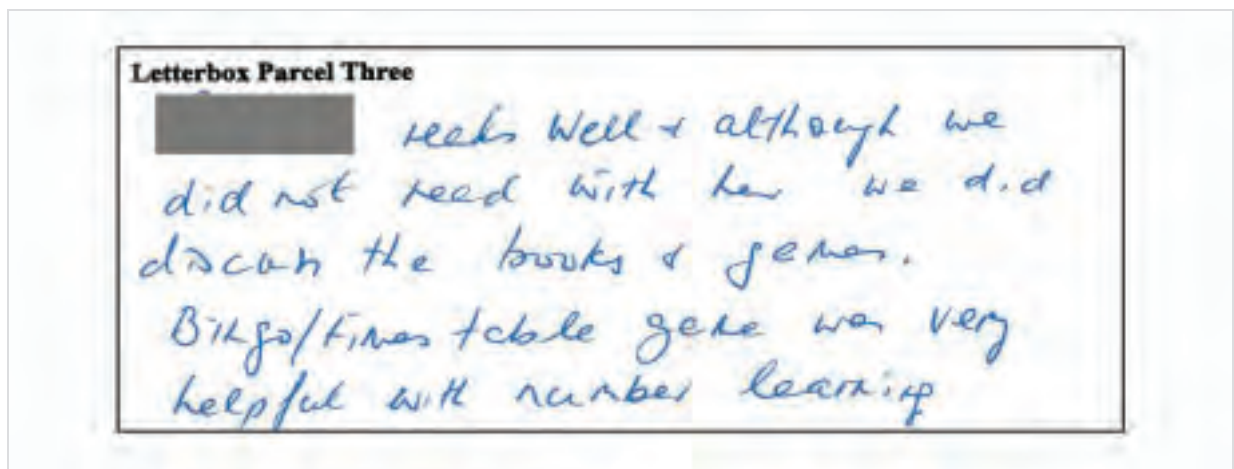
Caitlin's Evaluation Sheet

The distribution of the parcels coincided with Scottish school children voting for the Scottish Children's Book Awards. Caitlin had noticed the 'little sign' on *The Accidental Time Traveller* indicating that the book had been shortlisted for the award. Caitlin's teacher had handed out one of the three shortlisted books to each child in the class and Caitlin reported that she had told her teacher that the Letterbox Club had already given her *The Accidental Time Traveller* and that she was going to be voting for the book.

The *Harry Potter* book was the first one in the series that Caitlin had read and she said she would like to read more of them.

Jack received the Blue parcel and Caitlin played a significant role in supporting his engagement with the contents of each parcel. For example, she would read his books to him as well as reading her own books to him. Their carer believed that this shared reading with Jack had 'helped his reading skills'. Caitlin explained the rules of the number games to Jack and played them with him. Furthermore, she scribed his views about the materials on the evaluation forms.

Caitlin was very clear that she preferred the book and stationary to the maths games. She said that she did not like maths and was 'terrible at it'. She said, 'Poo! That's the only word that I can sum it up'. However, Caitlin had played with the number games from the parcels and she used some of the materials to make up her own games. For example, she explained that she was 'really bad at division' and had used the coins to help her with her calculations. Her carer thought the Bingo and Times Table game had supported both children's number learning.



Carer's Evaluation (Caitlin)

Caitlin thought the games would be fun for children who enjoyed maths. However she thought the games could still be 'a bit more fun' than they were. She gave the example of *Monopoly*, a game she really enjoyed playing, and explained that although 'that's got a bit of maths in it' she did not 'usually think about it when I'm doing it'.

Summing up the children's experiences of the Letterbox Club the carer said that the children had really looked forward to the parcels arriving and he stated:

I think the best thing was the fact that the children got a parcel which was addressed to them, which was personal to them, and that it was something that they could own. It was their property, they could decide what they wanted to do with it, whether they read the books or not.

Letter Box Parcel One

A good selection of books +
games. Our children enjoyed
the sense of having a parcel
every month just for them.


Carer's Evaluation (Caitlin)

3.3. Case Study Three: Emily and Lauren

Emily who is seven years old and her sister Lauren, who is eight years old, live with their carer who they call ‘Mum’. Both girls go to the same primary school and both received the Blue Letterbox parcel. Emily has additional support needs and repeated one year of schooling. She gets ‘extra help’ at school and is involved in a paired reading initiative. The sisters have different tastes in books and they showed an awareness of each other’s reading preferences. Lauren said she only read books with lots of chapters such as books from the *Horrid Henry* series whereas Emily, referring to picture books, said ‘I have flat books’ and her favourite was *Peppa Pig*.






All the family are members of the library and they go every two weeks. Their carer said the girls enjoy going to the library and that they read every day as a family with ‘all three of us sitting at the kitchen table’. Lauren also enjoys reading on her own, but Emily needs help from her carer when reading. Emily was aware of her difficulties with reading and she said ‘I just like looking at the pictures because I can’t read’. Lauren also helps her sister with reading. Their carer said:

*Lauren’s really good with sitting with Emily ... showing her how to read.
Whereas, before she used to tell her the word, but now she’ll say ‘sound it out’.*

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	☺☺	☹☹	☹☹	🚫	LOOKED AT THE PICTURES





Emily’s Evaluation Sheet

Emily found the *Ancient Egypt Sticker Book* ‘hard to read’, but was delighted with the stickers. She was able to locate the correct place for each sticker by looking closely at the shape of each object and matching the objects to the blank spaces on the pages. Talking about this book she said, ‘I loved that one by the way. I founded them all without reading’.





	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					Liked the story, but HS had to read.

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

The family go away most weekends and they often play games such as *Peppa Pig Dominoes*, Checkers and *Frustration* when it was 'cold and wet'. They took the number games from the parcels when they went away for the weekend and played them 'all together' with other family members. Lauren helped Emily read the instructions. They particularly 'loved playing Bingo' and their carer said that this game was 'well used'. Emily said 'I like the snap cards'. The girls explained that with Mum they had made their own snakes and ladders game and they had used the counters and dice from the parcels to play their game. The pretend money was described by their carer as a 'great hit' and she believed that it 'had helped the children with their school work. The girls set up a café and they used the notes and coins in their role play with other family members to pay for the meals and give change. They also created shopping lists and menus using paper from the exercise books and their big sister made a sign 'Emily's Café'. Their carer laminated all the paper money and the games. She also cut out pictures of food from magazines to put on plates and serve in the café.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
Number Games					Loved it helped to teach my sister money

Lauren's Evaluation Sheet

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
Number Games					Played a few Prime time Pulse

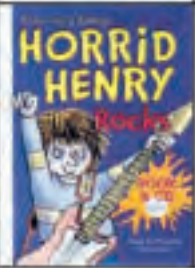
Emily's Evaluation Sheet

Letter Box Parcel One


Bingo was a Favourite
Exercise book was used for
Shopping List & menus.

Carer's Evaluation Sheet


The girls were able to draw on their previous experiences and make links with the books. Both girls said they loved *Pinocchio* and explained how they had seen the story performed in the theatre. They also mentioned *Horrid Henry* and said they watched this on television every day at four o'clock. If they are doing their homework the programme is taped and they watch it later. For Emily, *Jack and the Beanstalk* was a favourite book and she also spoke about *Little Red Riding Hood* saying, 'I know this story very well'.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
	✓				I listened to the CD. Took this book and CD to school.

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
	✓				I loved this book! * @

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
	✓				Loved the book parts.

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

Links were made between the parcels and school. Emily said the book she liked best out of all the parcels was *The Enormous Crocodile* because, she said, 'I have it in Primary 2'. Lauren took the *Deadly 60 Factbook Mammals* and *The Letterbox Club Joke Book* into school. Lauren had told her last teacher that she was a member of the Letterbox Club, but after the summer when she moved class she did not mention it to her new teacher.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Letterbox Club Joke Book	✓				I + d jokes = my <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 2px;"></div> <div style="background-color: black; width: 100px; height: 15px; margin: 2px;"></div>

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Letterbox Club Joke Book	✓				took it to school to show friends

Lauren's Evaluation Sheet

Lauren was a fan of Roald Dahl and she had already read *George's Marvellous Medicine* and was delighted to discover the *Enormous Crocodile* in one of the parcels. She took the book in to show her friends at school and said that she was asking Santa for the 'whole selection of Roald Dahl books' and really hoped that she would get them. Overall, Lauren thought the books were 'very interesting'. Lauren said that in one of the jotters she did a topic 'all about rockets' and drew pictures. She had also planned to do some handwriting in the jotter, but she had drawn so many pictures in it 'that the book ran out of pages'. The calculator was used for doing times tables that Lauren had not covered in school. Lauren explained, 'I tried all my other times tables that I don't know yet'. The children's carer said the calculator was 'a great idea' and had been used for homework and for taking to the supermarket to add up the cost of the items on the shopping lists the girls had created. Their carer said, 'It helps with their writing, it helps with their spelling, helps with the sums without them realising they are doing it'.

Their carer said the postcards were 'a great hit' and 'a favourite'. She went on to explain how the girls had personalised the postcards by decorating them. After they had sent all the postcards from the parcels their carer said they then bought more and had also made their own postcards to send to friends and relatives. Lauren described the Post-it notes as 'fab' and both girls described sticking them 'all about the house' with messages to Mum and Dad. For example, 'When are we

going to have dinner?', 'I love you' and 'I'm hungry'. Their carer said they sometimes put surprise messages inside Dad's laptop for him to find when he came home from work.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Postcards and Felt Pens	✓				I posted letters to all my family around my house

Emily's Evaluation Sheet

Discussing the family experiences of being in the Letterbox Club their carer talked about how surprised she was about the amount of material in each parcel and how she did not realise there would be games, stationary, pens and pencils. She also thought there would be only one book. For her the best thing about getting the parcels was the number of books gifted because she said 'I could never afford all these books'.

Their carer described how the parcels had helped build on family routines and practices. Summing up the impact she said, 'the girls have just absolutely loved it'. She believed that for both children being members of the Letterbox Club had benefited their 'sum work and reading'. However, she highlighted that for Emily, who she felt really needed 'the extra help', the impact of receiving the parcels had been particularly positive saying, 'especially Emily, definitely Emily'.

Letterbox Parcel Three

Red, books with [redacted] she has tried hard to read them to me.

Snap game [redacted] was very good at.

Joke book was good and taken to school.

The calculator was a great idea.

Carer's Evaluation Sheet (Emily)

3.4. Case Study Four: Ryan

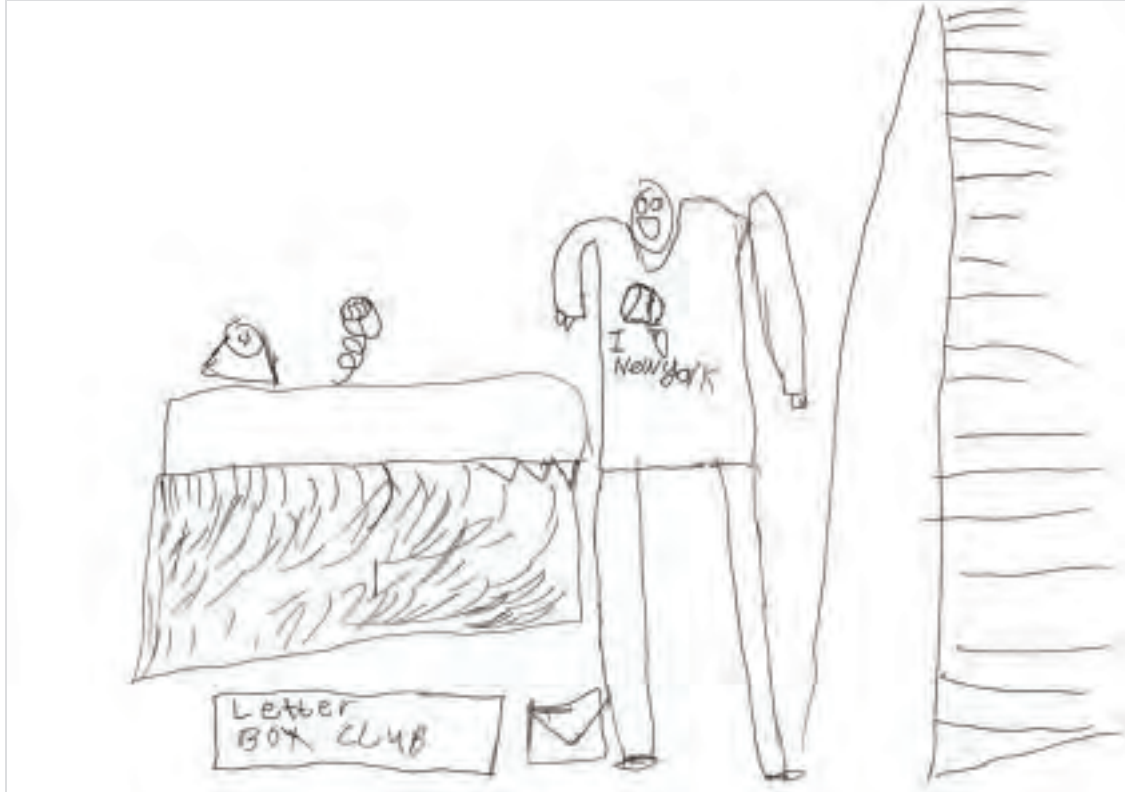
Ryan is nine years old and enjoys playing sport and watching football and rugby on television. He has been living with his foster carers, Dave and Helen, since he was five years old and before this had frequent moves. Ryan refers to his carers as Mum and Dad. Initially his carers were concerned that he might not be able to attend a mainstream school because of his additional support needs; however, Ryan stayed on at nursery for an extra year and was enrolled at the local primary school when he was six years old. He receives additional support at school and from a Looked after Children (LAC) tutor at home once a week.

Visiting the library is part of the family routine and Ryan enjoys 'picking the books'. He and Helen go to the library once a week and in the summer, at weekends 'when it's sunny,' Ryan and Dave cycle to the library. Ryan and Helen read two books every night and he said he 'likes learning new words'.

Helen had read about The Letterbox Club in the Fostering Network Magazine and was keen for Ryan to take part in the Scottish pilot of the initiative. She is a nursery teacher and she was clear from the start about the potential benefits that membership of the club could have for Ryan. She believed that it would, 'assist with his reading and education' and offer support 'for 'family time together' and 'a wee bit of closeness for him'. She summed up her expectations saying:

Just to get his own book, and for us to sit and read books and help him because he's no very good at reading. He's no very good at things like that. So I just thought, a wee bit of paired reading, him and me together and that's what I was expecting, him just to get the love of books that we've got in our family.

Ryan's Drawing: *That's me when I get the parcel. Dad's got a little letter and I've a large one.*



Ryan had a clear memory of receiving his first Blue Letterbox parcel. He described picking it up and thinking that that it must be for his Mum or Dad and then noticing that it had his name on it. When he opened it he said he was 'really surprised' and 'happy'. During the time that he received the parcels it seemed that for Ryan the surprise element was very important. He claimed that he had not told his teacher about the parcels in case she told other children. He said he did not want to spoil 'the surprise for the other boys and girls'. Helen said that he loved getting the parcels and was 'excited to see what is inside.' She recounted the ritual that developed around the opening of the parcels:

He would look at the envelope and think and feel it all. 'He likes to feel it to see what he's going to get in it first. He's trying to guess... then he would open it very carefully. Then he would go to the dining table and everything had to come out and he would take the whole parcel out and the envelope would be left to the side and he would use the envelope later on because he would draw on that and he would look at the books. He would look at the titles first, just kind of visually look at them, but he would pick one of interest...then he would have to have a good look at it. He would then tie them all up again for his dad. Then we would have to go through it all again. 'It came the day Dad. Guess what was in them?' He would then give his dad clues about books and Dad had to guess them.

Ryan's Drawing: *This is all my things from the parcel on the table.*



She described the ‘anticipation’ he felt before the arrival of each parcel wondering what was going to be in it, and that the whole experience had been ‘even better than we expected’ and that the ‘the quality of books is fantastic’.

She believed that Ryan’s involvement in the club had helped his reading and had encouraged him to read more. She said that his class teacher had noted that he was ‘more fluent and more confident in his reading’ and Helen went on to say:

He’s not afraid to try now, that was a wee thing. He was afraid to try and read in class. I think it’s building his confidence.

Ryan showed an awareness of his own development as a reader, and he too believed that he was making progress. He explained:






So, like when I was eight I struggled. Now I can read them off by heart. So I can read them now, but I never used to. Well, like I mean when I read a story, sometimes I like short ones when I’m really tired, but sometimes I like big ones.

Helen explained that Dave had enjoyed becoming involved in reading the books from the parcel with Ryan, and that for Ryan this ‘was his time for his dad’. Helen said her husband felt that ‘it’s benefited him and Ryan’ and that ‘he’s learnt things through this as well’.

After discussing the contents of the parcels, Dave also scribed all the evaluations of the parcels for Ryan. ‘*The Enormous Crocodile*’ and ‘*Horrid Henry*’ books were particular favourites for Ryan because he was already a fan and owned other titles by the authors. Another of his favourites was ‘*The Beano*’ and he explained:

My mum and dad said they used to read it when they were kids. My favourite was Dennis the Menace. He always gets up to mischief.

Dave noted how excited Ryan was he was when he discovered the *Pinocchio* book in the parcel because they were going to the pantomime at Christmas.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					I LIKED MY DAD READING ME THIS STORY BECAUSE I AM GOING TO SEE THE PANTOMIME AT CHRISTMAS. I CAN WATCH FOR PINOCCHIO'S NOSE GETTING BIGGER.

Ryan's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by his Carer





Ryan has difficulties sleeping and after his two bedtime stories he enjoyed listening to the *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Horrid Henry* CDs by himself. Helen felt that this helped him because 'there is something there in the background.' Dave recalled that the second parcel had 'really good colouring pens and Ryan played with them for ages.'

Ryan's Drawing: *That's me reading in bed.*



Ryan said he 'liked maths and timetables best', but Helen explained that Ryan struggled with maths at school and that he needed to 'work visually' with numbers.

Although in the past playing games was an activity they did as a family, since getting the parcels they had started to play games with Ryan every night in the same way that they had always read to him every night. Helen explained that they were now playing 'his games' after dinner each night, and at the weekend they had introduced 'wee prizes' for the winner. She stressed that 'we don't let him win, he's got to do it right!' Ryan also played the games with other family members. Ryan was keen to share his thoughts and talking about one game he said, 'It teaches me to count money and I beat my mum and dad'.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
Number Games					I like this game because my mum goes to the shops and now we can all play it at home.

Ryan's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by his Carer

The family adapted many of the games to cater for Ryan's learning needs. For example, the Bingo game was also used as a matching game, for practicing addition and for number recognition. Helen thought the coins were 'absolutely fantastic' and she explained how they had used them to support work on money that Ryan was doing in school. She said that they would ask him questions like, 'I'm buying two apples and I've got fifty pence. How much change would I get?'

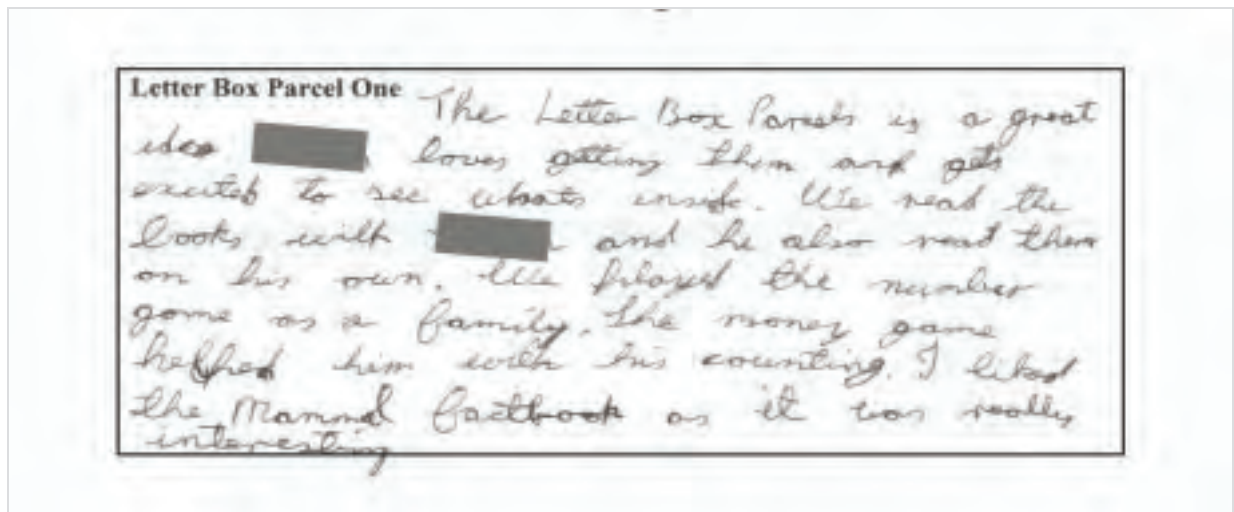
She believed that that playing the number games from the parcel had 'helped him so much.' She said:

He knows his two and three times tables, which is a big achievement for Ryan and that's just through the books, games and the wee money game as well.

Ryan was delighted with the calculator because the one he had was broken and he was happy to get one because they 'cost so much money'. He took the calculator into school in his bag every day.

Helen said that although he was 'not good with dates and times' she felt that he knew when the parcels were due to arrive. At one point he was reluctant to go on holiday before his next parcel

was delivered, however, the parcel did arrive before their flight departure and he chose a book from the parcel to put in his backpack. He also took the exercise book, pencil case and calculator on holiday so that he could practice 'writing and sums'.



Carer's Evaluation Sheet

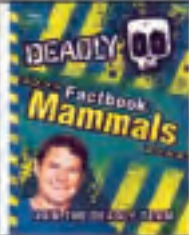

Ryan identified links between the Letterbox Club parcel and his learning at school and he offered examples of how some of the contents would support his school work. For example he mentioned the *Antarctica* book as a source of information that would be useful for him in his next year at school because he knew that this was a topic that the older children were studying. He suggested that reading this book now would support his learning the following year when he was in Primary 5. He explained, 'I'm making a wee head start on it'.

After looking at the *Ancient Egypt Sticker Book* Ryan and his carers decided to 'put it away just now' as they knew it was going to be his next project in school and Ryan said he would show it to his friends.

Ryan believed that it would be good for other children to get the parcels and he also had different suggestions about what could be included in other Letterbox Club parcels at different stages. He thought the Primary Six children would benefit from 'a danger book' that would prevent 'very stupid people touching electricity' and for Primary Five children a book about kings and queens.

Ryan clearly enjoyed the non-fiction books in the parcels and liked getting information about things. He explained this saying:

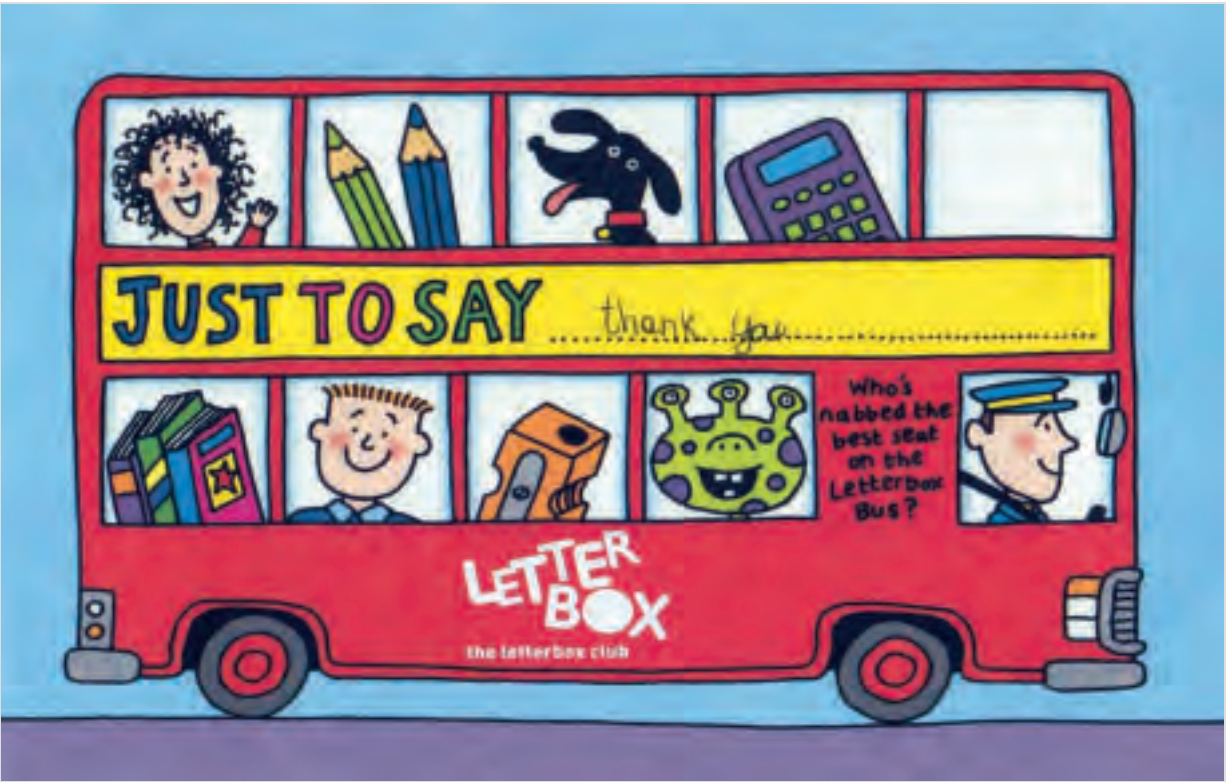
I like information. Kind of like...if someone walked over to me and was interested in Vikings and they said, 'What would Vikings eat?' Well I would, if I didn't know that...I don't know, but if I had information (I do know what they ate), but if I had information I would be able to say fish and porridge, oatcakes.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
 					<p>This book is very interesting because I tell you all about animals. I watch this on TV</p>

Ryan's Evaluation Sheet Scribed by his Carer

Ryan said that he felt 'sad' when he got his last parcel and Helen felt that overall it had been a fantastic experience. Summing up what she thought was key to the success of the Letterbox Club for Ryan, she explained that he had his name on the books and that 'he took them everywhere'. Stressing the importance of ownership, she said:

It's in the belonging. It's that part. They're my books. They're for me!



Ryan's Postcard

3.5. Case Study Five: Rachel and Kyle

Rachel who is ten years old and Kyle who is seven years old live with Alison their foster carer whom they refer to as Mum. Both children go to same primary school. Rachel is a Girl Guide who likes reading mystery and adventure stories, drawing and swimming. When she grows up she wants to be a nurse. Kyle likes playing football, running, swimming, playing on his computer and reading. The two children enjoy playing together, and with their own friends.


Rachel describes herself as 'a really good reader'. She reads every day and reading makes her feel 'really happy'. Her carer said Rachel 'reads anything and everything'. All the family go to the local library near the house every one or two weeks. For Rachel going to the library is an 'exciting' experience and she likes to read different types of books, including 'funny ones, some that have a wee scary bit in them, happy ones, adventure ones and princess ones'. She sometimes reads the same book 'over and over again'. She particularly enjoys the *Famous Five* and *Malory Towers* series and books by David Walliams and Jacqueline Wilson. Kyle enjoys sticker books and information books. A reading routine is well established in the home and the family often read together, sharing books in the morning and before bedtime. The children also read to each other and on their own.

Rachel said that when she received her first Red Letterbox parcel she had been really surprised as she thought it was just going to be full of letters. When she saw that it contained books she was delighted. Both Rachel and Alison talked about the excitement in the house on the days when Rachel's Red parcel and Kyle's Blue parcel arrived. Rachel described the scene:

I was always waiting for them to come and when they came I was like, 'Yeah, mine!' Em, before my Mum could get it, I just took it myself and went into my room to open it and then I shared it with my Mum, my little brother and with the rest of my family. He [Kyle] was like 'Yeah!' and went into the living room to open his. So we were in two separate rooms and then we came through to each other.

Alison felt that for both children getting the parcels through the post added to the excitement and if they arrived on a weekday she would put them back out on the mat so that the parcels were lying waiting for the children returning from school. She thought that it was a good idea that some of the parcels had arrived during the summer holidays as she felt that 'they had more time on their hands to sit and read'. She said that during this period she would still read to the children, but she felt that the Letterbox Club books 'kinda spurred them on, especially during the summer holidays because they're not getting as much reading with not being at school'. The children took the books with them if they were going on car journeys or short breaks and they also frequently played the CDs in the car. Kyle particularly liked the *Jack and The Beanstalk* CD.

The book about the Titanic stood out for Rachel as this was the topic she was studying at school. She said: ‘When I opened the parcel I thought WOW!’ She was really excited as she had to make a model of the Titanic and she used the book to help her. Rachel asked if she could take the book to school to show her teacher and Alison encouraged her to take it. This proved to be a positive experience as it turned out that the teacher had brought in the same book, and she asked Rachel to help her read the book to the whole class. Rachel told this story with a sense of pride and added that the teacher had asked her if she could leave her book in school for a few days so that it could be shared with all the children. Alison felt that this whole episode had been ‘great’ for Rachel. Both children also learned jokes from the *Letterbox Club Joke Book* and were also able to use these at school in a ‘Challenge’ event.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Don't Use It	Child's Comments
					<p>My school topic was the Titanic so the book was a great help. I took the book to school for my topic work. My friend [redacted] asked to borrow the book. My teacher got the same book.</p>

Rachel's Evaluation Sheet

The money games were ‘a great success’ and Rachel felt that they had helped her with her maths:

I had got the money games and I wasn't very good at giving change. I got a toy till for my birthday, but I was always getting wrong change, so when I got that, that helped me to think of giving more change and it helped me how to calculate change.

Rachel said that she loved maths and went on to explain how the money from the parcels had supported her. She said, ‘I used that in the house to help me with homework because we get money for homework.’

Alison was aware that both children were learning about money in school and she believed that using the Letterbox Club resources at home had ‘been a help’ for both Rachel and Kyle. She said that the children had enjoyed playing the games together and making up their own rules. Rachel also used the money in different play contexts. For example she described playing at shops:

Sometimes I put out little tins of anything or different toys. I put them out and I would bring my till and I would put all the Letterbox money into it, and I would go round with it saying, 'Do you want anything? Do you want this? Do you want this? Until someone bought something'.

Alison described how both children had ‘pooled the money’ from their Red and Blue parcels to play at shops together and, on other occasions when the children were ‘putting on a show’ they would hand out money to family members to use for buying tickets.





Rachel’s favourite game was *Multiplication Bingo*, but she said that she had enjoyed them all. She liked the fact that she could use the games for ‘different activities’ play them with her family and also take them into school to play with her friends.

Rachel helped Kyle read some of the instructions for the games, but they had also really enjoyed making up their own rules. Alison felt that the two of them doing this had ‘brought them together’.

She described this family bonding:

Sitting reading together, playing the games together and because they were making up their own rules, it was as if there was no fighting, arguing or squabbling- it was kinda taken into this making up your own rules.

Alison was pleased to see Kyle ‘being interested in numbers’ because although he liked picture and memory games he would not normally show an interest in maths or number games, and so she felt that it had really helped him in particular.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Postcards and Felt Pens					The number games are good fun and you can make up your own rules which is great.

Kyle's Evaluation Sheet

Receiving the parcels seemed to have had a notable impact on Rachel’s story writing. She said that the contents of the parcels had encouraged her to start writing stories at home and had supported her writing at school. She explained that she had not really written stories before at home:

I’m mainly just reading, but when I got them I was like I’m definitely going to start writing, so that made me write more at school as well, and sometimes I wrote about three or four pages at school. Because, like I knew I wasn’t really good at them, but then I got better as I got more parcels. Because I got jotters to write ideas in and the books helped me because I like to read as well so, em, I think that’s why.


Rachel said that as well as the books from the parcels she had lot of books in the house and was ‘a fast reader’ and she felt that this had prompted her to write. She explained:

I got more and more inspired by the authors so I decided to try and write my own stories, so I did.

Rachel liked the jotters and she used them for different purposes. For example one for drawing and another for noting down ideas for stories. Rachel found the *Write Your Own Story Book* very useful and used it to support her story writing at home and at school. It had helped her with ideas and with the structure of her stories:

Because when I was writing stories when I was younger, like I couldn’t really write them. Mine’s wouldn’t make sense, or it would go off into a different story and when I had got that, that like really helped because I was staying on the same story, as well I was using ideas that was on the border. It tells you reminders or it tells you words you can use.

She also lent the book to her school friends who used it to help their writing. Rachel was pleased that her friends had said that she was ‘really, really good at doing ideas’.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
	✓				<p>we had to write a story at school as if we were a Victorian child so this book was a great help with this. I shared it with some girls in my class. It had good ideas.</p>

Rachel’s Evaluation Sheet

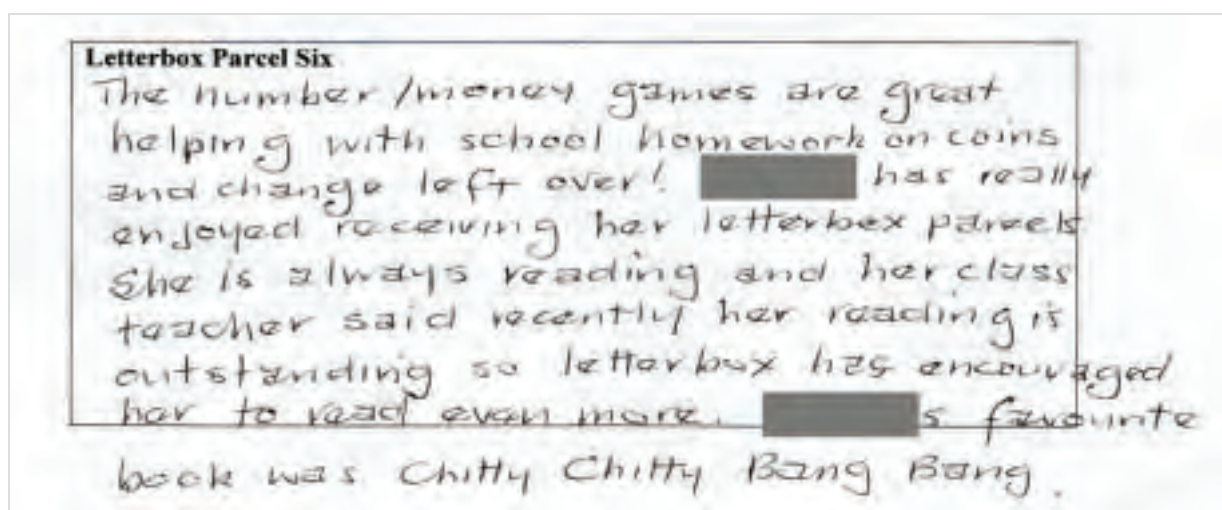
Rachel also used the book to help Kyle with his writing. Although they had helped each other in the past with homework, she said that they had not previously 'helped each other write stories.'

Alison said that seeing the impact that the *Write Your Own Story Book* had on Rachel had been interesting. She said that 'it had obviously worked' and described how after receiving the book Rachel had used her pocket money to buy files 'to make up her own book'. She had also written stories in the jotters and listed opening lines 'to make the story more interesting.' Alison felt that 'she wouldn't have done that if she hadn't got the parcel.'

This had also been a learning experience for Alison as she said that *Write Your Own Story Book* was not the kind of book that she would normally have bought for Rachel, preferring to buy an 'actual story book.' She noted, 'So, it's kinda opened my eyes a wee bit too', and then went on to explain how seeing the impact of the book on Rachel had influenced her next book purchase:

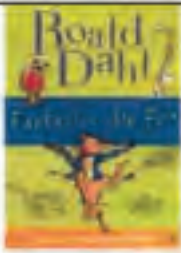
I would have probably just overlooked that and had a quick look over it and left it. Whereas now, the last time we were in town, we picked up a book that was about your family and things like that, and it was how to make a chart about your family so we picked that up 'cause it was on similar lines. So I thought we could do that during the holidays, so I've put that by so we could do that over the Christmas holidays.

Talking about the impact of the Letterbox Club parcels, Alison felt that although she had always taken the children to the library and book fairs she would 'probably go into actual bookshops more now' and 'just go round them and let them choose their own books to keep, rather than go to the library'. She explained that the children liked to read their books 'over and over again'. Alison said that both children had read everything in the parcel and that there was a good selection of quality books with 'something to suit' all children.



Carer's Evaluation Sheet (Rachel)

Rachel particularly enjoyed the *Harry Potter* book as she said it was ‘really adventurous’ and it was the first one that she had read in the series. She had seen the films, but now felt that she preferred the books as ‘they tell a little bit more’. She was keen to read more books in the *Harry Potter* series and said that she would save up all her pocket money to buy them. She recognised *The Accidental Time Traveller* as one of the books that had featured on a bookmark given out at school that showed the three final books in her age category for the Scottish Children’s Book Awards. She also mentioned *Fantastic Mr Fox* which she had discussed with her teacher.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
	✓				This was very funny. Some parts were a bit sad too. My teacher likes this book. I like the part about the farmer digging up the tree roots.

Rachel's Evaluation Sheet

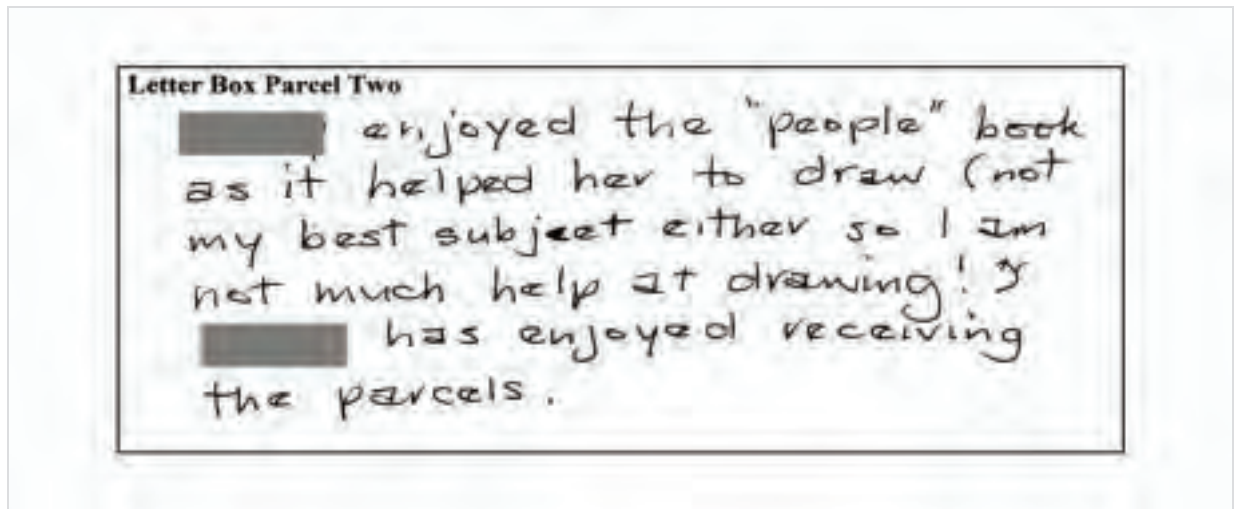
Rachel and Kyle shared the contents of their Blue and Red parcels, ‘swopping books’, ‘looking at each other’s things’ playing the games, reading the books together and telling each other jokes that they had learned from *Letterbox Club Joke Book*. Rachel also enjoyed sharing the books with her friends and she took the coloured pens to share with the other Girl Guides when they were decorating puppets they had made.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Postcards and Felt Pens	✓				I took my felt tip pens to the Girl Guides and I used them to colour in things for my puppet show I made.

Rachel's Evaluation Sheet

Rachel thought that if she was making up a Letterbox Club parcels she would put in ‘lots of stationery’ such as pens, pencils, rulers, and notepads. She said that she would also include some

non-fiction books and some games for children to play. She believed that money games 'would be a great help to other people' and that this would be a good choice because it 'would be fun and they would be learning at the same time'. She also suggested including skipping ropes so that the children could 'play outside as well'.



Carer's Evaluation Sheet (Rachel)

In addition to reading the books from the parcel on her own, Rachel described how they all read some of the books from the parcel as a family and that they 'took turns' reading. Talking about this book sharing she said, 'So like we were all having fun together'. She also talked about other reading routines: sometimes she read to Kyle, sometimes he read to her and they enjoyed Mum reading to them both.

Rachel used the sticky notes from the parcel to write notes to Mum, to list things she wanted for Christmas, to write down plans for the holiday and things they would need to take. Alison described how Kyle used one of the jotters to try to record all the books that he had read since he was a baby. She said that he wanted to know things like the name of his first book, his first reading book and he wrote down the answers she gave.

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
	😊	😐	😞	🚫	
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Exercise Book Pencil Case	✓				I wrote all the books in I have read in the book.

Kyle's Evaluation Sheet

Alison hoped that the Letterbox Club would continue. She believed that Rachel and Kyle had 'gained a lot' from being in it and she said:

I think they have had a lot of fun, a lot of excitement, but I think they learnt too and I think it's encouraged them more to read, although both their class teachers say they are both really into books... I think for other children that don't go to the library or people who don't get the chance, I think it would be great if they could get the same opportunity.

4. Key Findings and Recommendations

4.1. Key Findings

- There was evidence to suggest that a key strength of the pilot was the interagency partnership between Booktrust and Scottish local authorities, and the collaboration between local authority representatives, social workers, social care workers and the children and carers.
- At the beginning of the pilot there was evidence to suggest that many of the children and carers believed that membership of the Letterbox Club would have a positive impact on children's learning and family time together.
- The role of the carer and other family members was central to the use of the parcels to support children's learning, but this involvement and engagement varied from family to family. Carers varied in their confidence and knowledge of how to use the parcels to support their children's learning in the home and at school.
- For the majority of the families the arrival of the Letterbox Club parcel was a significant event and viewed with anticipation and excitement.
- Carers noted that spending time together and engaging with the materials had fostered family bonding and had encouraged positive interactions.
- Throughout the pilot all the children and carers reflected on the benefits of receiving the parcels. However, a few of the participants also highlighted challenges such as the demands of the reading materials and the time constraints.
- All of the families spoke positively about the quality and range of materials included in the parcels and were surprised at the amount of materials they received over the six months. Carers noted that the range of materials appealed to the children's different interests.
- The timing of the arrival of the parcels was felt to be important by some carers, for example, some thought there were benefits of receiving it on a Saturday morning during term time, whereas during the summer holidays there were occasionally time constraints because the children were playing outside more or the family was away from home.
- In most families there were examples of carers using the content of the parcels to support and build on established family routines such as playing games, shared reading and play contexts.
- In some cases carers reported that their involvement in activities with their children and their observations of their children's responses to the materials, had prompted them to

reflect on approaches to support their children's learning and to consider the type of resources that would stimulate their children's interests.

- There is evidence to suggest that the contents of the parcels acted as a stimulus for children and carers to try out new literacy, maths and drawing activities.
- Statements made by the children demonstrated their sense of ownership and pride in belonging to the Letterbox Club. Reflecting on the experience many of the children's comments suggested that there was also a sense of feeling 'special' and they liked that the parcels were addressed to them personally.
- There were many examples of children seeing the value of the contents of the parcel in terms of supporting them with their learning and schoolwork. Children identified particular books, games and materials to justify their claims.
- Evidence suggests that for some children sharing the contents of the parcels with their friends, other family members and their teachers had a positive impact on their self-esteem and confidence.
- For some children, books by particular authors, or books that were part of a series, acted as a 'hook' to read more books by the author or from the particular series.
- The stationary was popular with all the children and there was evidence to show that for the majority of the children this had encouraged drawing and writing.
- There were many examples of children and carers adapting games to suit their needs, and children making up their own games and rules and using the resources in their own play contexts.
- There were many examples of the parcels having extended the children's reading repertoire and having offered them access to a wider range of genres. Participants noted a good balance of quality books by popular authors that they recognised and that built on previous experience, as well as books that were new to the families and added to the element of surprise.
- Books with links to popular culture (e.g. television, film) and personal experience (e.g. school topics) were well received by the children, as was the comic annual which also seemed to have an intergenerational appeal.
- Children liked being asked for their opinions about the contents of the parcels and, in the main, were keen to offer detailed feedback about their likes and dislikes.
- In the families where siblings both received parcels, there were examples of children supporting each other in using the contents of the parcel and playing and learning together.

- There was evidence of some of the children demonstrating an awareness of their own development in reading and maths and that this awareness influenced their use and views of the material in the parcels.
- For the children with additional support needs some of the resources in the parcels were not at an appropriate level for their stage of development.
- There was evidence of the children who had difficulties with reading using effective strategies to support their interaction with the books from the parcels e.g. using picture cues, sounding out, reading the blurb and bringing previous experience to the text. They were able to retell some of the stories that had been read to them.

4.2. Recommendations

Letterbox Club Scotland should consider the following:

- The potential of the Letterbox Club to strengthen the capacity of carers and their children to engage more with literacy practices, and increase their involvement in maths activities and drawing.
- Further development of the Letterbox Club Scotland initiative that draws on interagency partnerships with library services, primary schools and with specific national initiatives such as the Scottish Children Book Awards.
- The involvement of some carers in support/training sessions aimed at exploring the potential of using the parcel contents to enhance children's learning in the home, that takes account of carers own literacy and numeracy skills and confidence. Opportunities for carers to explore the resources in advance and guidance for carers that is included in the parcels with suggestions for activities.
- Support for carers in terms of encouraging their children's engagement and how to create 'an event' around the arrival and opening of the parcel.
- Developing the role of the child's social worker, social care worker, LAC tutor and/or other significant adults to support the use of the parcel in the home and to promote links with learning in school.
- The importance of listening to children's views about the content of the parcels and continuing to develop the good practice already in place which makes this a key aspect of their membership of the Letterbox Club.
- The possibility of involving children in the selection of the materials to be included in the parcels.
- Continue to review the contents of the parcels and consider including language games, library membership information, suggestions for other books and number games and

links to websites e.g. Scottish Book trust, Scottish Children's Book Awards and the websites of popular authors.

- The need to differentiate in terms of the content of the parcels for children with additional support needs, and where two siblings in the same family are receiving the same colour of parcel.
- The potential of making explicit links between the Letterbox parcel activities and the Experiences and Outcomes in *Curriculum for Excellence*.
- Sharing information about the child's membership of the Letterbox Club with the primary school and class teacher, remembering that many children have a new teacher when they return in August after the summer vacation.
- Build on the potential of making links with the school, and in their personal letter encourage children to take some of the things from their Letterbox parcel to their class so that they can share them with their teacher and friends.

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Hi

Our names are Andy and Moira and we work at the University of Edinburgh. Letterbox Club have asked us to find out what children think about the Letterbox parcels. We would like you to talk to us about the parcels and fill in a questionnaire.

Do I have to do this?

It is up to you if you want to talk to us and fill in the questionnaire. If you want to stop at any time just tell us. If you don't want to talk to us or fill in the questionnaire you will still get your Letterbox parcels.

Who will know what I have said?

If it is ok we will write some things down and we'll use a tape recorder if you are happy with this. We would like to use some of the things you say in your own words. We won't use anybody's real name so nobody will know who said what.

What sort of things will you ask me?

- if you shared the books with anyone
- who you played the games with
- your favourite thing in the parcel
- why you really liked or did not like a book or game
- if the books or games helped you with anything you are interested in or are learning about at school

Thank you

Andy and Moira

Consent Form for Children

Letterbox Club Pilot Project

Research by the University of Edinburgh

I have been given enough information about this project

Yes No

It has been explained to me how the information I give will be used

Yes No

I am prepared to talk to Andy and Moira about my experiences of taking part in the Letterbox Club

Yes No

I am happy for Andy and Moira to record what I say

Yes No

I understand that I can leave at any time and do not have to answer a question if I don't want to

Yes No

I give permission for what I say to be included in a report but understand that my name will not be mentioned

Yes No

Signature

Date

Letterbox Club Pilot Project in Scotland

About the project

We would like to invite you and your foster child to take part in research to find out about your experience of the Letterbox Club. As a carer of a child who will be receiving parcels from Letterbox Club your views on this would be very important.

Booktrust and the Letterbox Club have asked us to find out how this project is working.

What we want to find out

- 1) We would like to speak to you as a carer involved in the project because we think your views are very important.
- 2) With your permission we would also like to talk to your child.

We want to find out about:

- Your views on the Letterbox Club Project
- Sharing books and games with your child
- The impact of the project, if any, on your child

What will happen if I decide to take part?

If you are willing to talk to us:

- We will meet you where it is convenient for you
- We would like to record what you say, but if you would prefer us not to this is fine and we can take notes instead
- You can leave or tell us to stop asking questions at any time
- It is fine to not answer any of our questions if you don't want to
- Everything you tell us will be confidential and your identity will not be disclosed in the report

If you are willing we would also like you to complete a questionnaire

What will happen if I agree my child can take part?

If your child is willing to talk to us:

- We will arrange a meeting to suit you and your child
- We would like to record what your child says but if they don't want us to this is fine and we will take notes instead
- He or she can leave or tell us to stop asking questions at any time
- It is fine if he or she does not want to answer a question
- Your child's identity will not be disclosed in the report

What we will do with the information we collect

The information we get from you and the others involved in the project will be used to write a report for Booktrust. This will help them in supporting the Letterbox Club which aims to encourage children to enjoy books and games. The report will be for anyone who wants to read it at the end of the project. We will not use anyone's name in the report but with your permission we would like to include some of the things you say in the report.

The tapes and notes will be stored in a safe, lockable place and will be destroyed when the research is finished. Only the research team will see this information. We will not tell anyone that you or your child took part.

It is entirely up to you if you want to take part and you are free to change your mind at any time without having to give a reason.

We hope that you will agree to take part in the evaluation of the project. If you would like any further information about the evaluation or there are any questions you would like to ask please contact us. You can get in touch with us anytime and we will be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Andy Hancock email: andy.hancock@ed.ac.uk

Moir Leslie email: moira.leslie@ed.ac.uk

Please fill in the enclosed consent form and return to us to let us know whether you are willing to take part.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information. Your assistance is much appreciated.

Consent Form for Carers

Letterbox Club Pilot Project

Research by the University of Edinburgh

I have been given enough information about this project Yes ☐ No ☐

It has been explained to me how the information I give will be used Yes ☐ No ☐

I am prepared to talk to the researchers about my experiences of taking part in the Letterbox Club Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy for the researcher to record what I say Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I can leave at any time and do not have to answer a question if I don't want to Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for what I say to be included in a report but understand that my name will not be mentioned Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for a researcher to speak to my child or children but understand that names will not be mentioned Yes ☐ No ☐

SignatureDate

Letterbox Club Pilot Project in Scotland

About the project

We would like to invite you to take part in research to find out about your experience of the Letterbox Club.

Booktrust and the Letterbox Club have asked us to undertake an evaluation of this project.

What we want to find out

We would like to speak to you as a professional involved in the project because your views are very important in terms of this evaluation.

Research Aims

The main aim of the research is to evaluate the impact of the Letterbox parcels on children and carers. More specifically the research will:

- Explore the child's attitudes, confidence and enjoyment around reading, writing and maths, and how these may have changed as a result of receiving the Letterbox Club parcels.
- Gather children's and carers' opinions of the parcels.
- Explore how the parcels have been used in the home.
- Discuss the participants' experiences of receiving the parcels each month and the impact this has had on the child.
- Highlight specific examples of how the programme has impacted upon the child (and carer).
- Consider whether the programme has led to increases in the amount of time children spend reading, doing maths activities, writing, drawing.

What will happen if I decide to take part?

If you are willing to talk to us:

- We will meet you in your place of work
- We would like to record what you say, but if you would prefer us not to this is fine and we can take notes instead
- Everything you tell us will be confidential and your name will not be used in the report

What we will do with the information we collect

The information we get from you and the others involved in the project will be used to write a report for Booktrust. This will help them in developing the Letterbox Club in Scotland. The report will be for anyone who wants to read it at the end of the project. We will not use anyone's name in the report but with your permission we would like to include some of the things you say in the report.

The tapes and notes will be stored in a safe, lockable place and will be destroyed when the research is finished. Only the research team will see this information.

It is entirely up to you if you want to take part and you are free to change your mind at any time without having to give a reason.

We hope that you will agree to take part in the evaluation of the project. If you would like any further information about the evaluation or there are any questions you would like to ask please contact us.

Andy Hancock email: andy.hancock@ed.ac.uk

Moir Leslie email: moira.leslie@ed.ac.uk

Please fill in the enclosed consent form and return to us to let us know whether you are willing to take part.

Many thanks for taking the time to read this information. Your assistance is much appreciated.

Consent Form for Professionals involved in the Project

The Letterbox Club

Research by the University of Edinburgh

I have been given enough information about this project Yes ☐ No ☐

It has been explained to me how the information I give will be used Yes ☐ No ☐

I am prepared to talk to the researchers about my experiences of taking part in the Letterbox Club Yes ☐ No ☐

I am happy for the researcher to record what I say Yes ☐ No ☐

I understand that I can leave at any time and do not have to answer a question if I don't want to Yes ☐ No ☐

I give permission for what I say to be included in a report but understand that my name will not be mentioned Yes ☐ No ☐

SignatureDate

Letterbox Club											
Family Code	Date of Completion:										
Part A: Family Profile											
1. Children in the home details <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">a. Child 1 (receiving letterbox parcel)</td> <td style="width: 20%;">Age</td> <td style="width: 30%;">Gender</td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Child 2</td> <td>Age</td> <td>Gender</td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Child 3</td> <td>Age</td> <td>Gender</td> </tr> </table>			a. Child 1 (receiving letterbox parcel)	Age	Gender	b. Child 2	Age	Gender	c. Child 3	Age	Gender
a. Child 1 (receiving letterbox parcel)	Age	Gender									
b. Child 2	Age	Gender									
c. Child 3	Age	Gender									
2. School/Nursery/Playgroup etc Where applicable name of establishment <table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">a. Child 1</td> <td style="width: 20%;"></td> <td style="width: 30%;"></td> </tr> <tr> <td>b. Child 2</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>c. Child 3</td> <td></td> <td></td> </tr> </table>			a. Child 1			b. Child 2			c. Child 3		
a. Child 1											
b. Child 2											
c. Child 3											
Part B: Questionnaire											
1. What do you think you will get out of the Letterbox Club?											
<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;">Adult:</div> <div>Child:</div>											

2. Were the aims of the Letterbox Club explained to you at the start?							
<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;">Adult:</div> <div>Child:</div>							
3. Are you looking forward to taking part/any reservations?							
<div style="margin-bottom: 20px;">Adult:</div> <div>Child:</div>							
4. a. Are you a member of a library?							
Adult:		Yes/No					
Child:		Yes/No					
b. If yes, how often do you visit the library?							
Adult:	Never	Rarely	Once a week	2/3 times a week	Almost everyday	Everyday	
Child:	Never	Rarely	Once a week	2/3 times a week	Almost everyday	Everyday	

c. If yes, how many books do you take home on each visit?

Adult:

Child:

Any comments about your visits to the library?

Adult:

Child:

5. How often do you read? (Child) (Please circle)

Never Rarely Once a week 2/3 times a week Almost everyday Everyday

6. Do you share a book with the child? (E.g. Morning Daytime Evening Before bed)

Adult: Yes/No

Any comments?

7. CHILD

a. How of you feel about reading?

b. What kind of books do you like to read?

c. What is your favourite book that you have read recently?

d. Would you recommend it to a friend ?

e. What would you say to them about the book?	
f. Tell us everyone who reads to you – including your teacher!	
8.	Do you ever write things at home (for example, stories, diary, and notes)? Give details:
Child:	
9.	Do you play any number games? Yes/No
Adult:	
Child:	

10. a. What are you favourite games?
Child:
b. How do you feel about Maths?
Child:
c. Tell us what you are learning about Maths at school?
Child:
d. What do you feel about Maths?
Child:

11. ADULT

Have you been given any information or support in helping the child with reading and number work?

If YES please specify



Hi

We are really interested to know what you thought about your first two Letterbox Club Parcels.

Please write lots of comments and return this form in the stamped addressed envelope.

You might want to tell us about

- your favourite thing in the parcel
- if you shared the books with anyone
- who you played the games with
- why you really liked or did not like a book or game
- if the books or games helped you with anything you are interested in or are learning about at school.

Best Wishes








The Letterbox Club



Letterbox Club – Parcel One

Your Name:




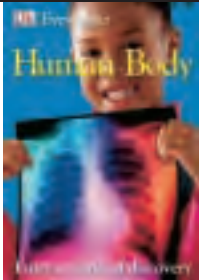
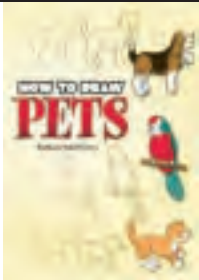

Your Age:

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
					
					
					
Number Games					
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Exercise Book Pencil Case					

Letterbox Club – Parcel Two

Your Name:

Your Age:

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
					
					
					
Number Games					
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Postcards and Felt Pens					



Adult's Comments

Please tell us what you thought about the Letter Box Parcels.

The following questions may help:

- Did you read/talk about any of the books with the child?
- Who did the child play the number game with?
- Do you think any of the books or games helped the child with any of his/her interests or learning at school?
- What was your favourite thing in the parcel and why?

Letter Box Parcel One

Letter Box Parcel Two



Hi

We are really interested to know what you thought about your first two Letterbox Club Parcels.

Please write lots of comments and return this form to us.

You might want to tell us about

- your favourite thing in the parcel
- if you shared the books with anyone
- who you played the games with
- why you really liked or did not like a book or game
- if the books or games helped you with anything you are interested in or are learning about at school.

Best Wishes



The Letterbox Club



Letterbox Club – Parcel One

Your Name:

Your Age:

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
					
					
<p>Equipment and Stationery</p> <p>(for example) Exercise Book Pencil Case</p>					

Letterbox Club – Parcel Two

Your Name:

Your Age:

	Liked It	It Was Okay	Didn't Like It	Didn't Use It	Child's Comments
					
					
					
					
Number Games					
Equipment and Stationery (for example) Postcards and Felt Pens					



Adult's Comments

Please tell us what you thought about the Letter Box Parcels.

The following questions may help:

- Did you read/talk about any of the books with the child?
- Who did the child play the number game with?
- Do you think any of the books or games helped the child with any of his/her interests or learning at school?
- What was your favourite thing in the parcel and why?

Letter Box Parcel One

Letter Box Parcel Two

Letterbox Club Scotland

Interview Schedule Children

The interviews will also ask specific questions that draw on information gathered from the individual profiles and evaluation sheets

Question Prompts

Reflecting on the Experience

What did you think you would get out of the Letterbox Club?

Was it what you expected?

Tell us your story about opening one of the parcels? (When, where and with whom?) How did you feel?

If the Letterbox Club continues next year would you like to be part of it? (If so, why or why not?)

If you were describing the Letterbox Club to a friend what would you say?

Did your teacher know that you were taking part in the Letterbox Club? Did you tell any of your teachers about it? Did you tell your school friends about it?

What is the best thing about Letterbox Club?

Was there anything you didn't like about Letterbox Club?

Books and Stationery: Children's Interests and Reading/Writing Habits

Tell us about your recent library visits. Did the library staff know about the Letterbox Club?

What kind of books do you like to read? E.g. non-fiction, adventure, humour

Where do you get books from?

Tell us everyone who reads to you - including your teacher!

Were you able to read the books on your own? Did someone else read them to you?

What is your favourite book that you have read recently? (Letterbox Club, school, other?)

Why did you choose this book? (Genre?)

Would you recommend it to a friend?

What would you say to them about the book?

(Using the evaluation sheet as a prompt) Ask questions about their opinions about individual books, if they read them and whether they would recommend to a friend and what they would say about the book.

(Using the evaluation sheet pictures of the books from the Scottish Children's Book Awards as a prompt) Tell us what you thought about this book.

Did you know that the book was written by a Scottish author?

Did you listen to the stories on CD (who with? when?)

Did the books help you with anything you are interested in or are learning about at school?

Did reading the book make you want to read anything by the same author?

Did you talk about/read the books with anyone else?

Do you have any suggestions for any books you know that could be put in the Letterbox parcels?

Do you ever write things at home? (for example, stories, diary, notes)

Tell us how you used the stationery/postcards. Give details:

Are there any other stationery items you think could be included in the parcels?

Number Games: Children's Interests and Habits

How do you feel about Maths?

Tell us what you are learning about in Maths at school?

What do you like best about Maths?

Did you like the number games? If yes, why? If not, why?

Did you play the number games in the parcels?

Who did you play the games with?

Did you use any of the bits in the games to make up your own games?

Did you understand the instructions?

Did you work out how to play the game yourself?

Did the games teach you anything new about number?

Did the games help you with anything you are interested in or are learning about at school?

What are your favourite games?

Do you have any suggestions for any games you know that could be put in the Letterbox parcels?

What did you like best, the books or the number games?

Letterbox Club Scotland

Interview Schedule Carers

The interviews will also ask specific questions that draw on information gathered from the individual profile and evaluation sheets

Question Prompts

Reflecting on the experience

What did you think your child would get out of the Letterbox Club?

Was it what you expected?

Were the aims of the Letterbox Club explained to you at the start?

Did you meet other carers who were involved in the Letterbox Club?

Would you like information on supporting children with reading, writing and number?

Can you suggest any support that would help making best use of the parcels?

Was there anything you would have liked to know more about?

Any reservations?

What did you think of the parcels? Did they help you do more with your child?

Would you recommend this initiative to other carers?

Some of the parcels arrived during the summer holiday period. Was there anything significant about this?

Did your child's school know they were taking part in the Letterbox Club? Did the teacher or any staff at the school report anything your child had said to them about the Letterbox Club?

Best thing about Letterbox Club?

Anything that did not work/they did not like?

Books and Stationery: Children's Interests and Reading/Writing Habits

What are your observations about your child's reading habits and interests?

Have there been any changes to you and your child's reading patterns in the home?

Tell us about your recent library visits? Did the library staff know about the Letterbox Club?

Apart from Letterbox parcels where do you get books from?

What did you think of the books? Any favourites?

Did you and your child read the books?

Did your child enjoy reading the books?

Have you observed the child writing things at home? (e.g. stories, diaries, notes)

Tell us how your child used the stationery/ postcards. Did you do any of this together?

Are there any stationery items you think could be included in the parcels?

Did the books help your child with anything they are interested in or are learning about at school?

Number Games: Children's Interests and Habits

Did you and your child play the number games in the parcels? Who else did your child play the number games with?

Did you like the number games? If yes, why? If not, why?

Did your child enjoy playing the number games?

Did your child use any of the bits in the games to make up your own games?

Did your child understand the instructions?

Did your child work out how to play the game themselves?

Did you think the games taught child anything new about number?

Did the games help your child with anything they are interested in or are learning about at school?

Do you think the number games were suitable for your child? (e.g. age-appropriate, engaging)

What did your child like best, the books or the number games?